Our Thrilling Adventure.

"Now, Alex," said Agnes in her most lofty manner, as she took the reins from her brother's hands, and jerked her horse's head up, by way of showing her superior knowledge of horsemanship, "you may deposit your body and bones on the gate post to await our return, so that you can open the gate immediately, for you know we mustn't be kept waiting."

She waved her whip majestically, and Diamond trotted out of the lane into the road.

"Oh, certainly," said the young man meekly, as he fastened the gate. "It looks like rain, but of course I wouldn't mind getting soaked waiting for three such charming young ladies. Is there anything else you would like me to do? I might run after you with your dinner on a tray if you were late and—"

"Oh, you poor thing!" cried Minerva, who was not his sister, and who looked very beautiful under her wide blue hat. "We shan't be so exacting. You may read your book till we return."

"No, you'd better not," responded his sister. "You would be sure to get interested in it and forget the gate. Keep a sharp eye on the road. Tell mother to have chicken pie for dinner. Don't go into the parlor with your muddy boots. Don't smoke within a mile of my room; and don't forget to open the gate. Get up, Diamond Jubilee!"

And we trotted gently down the road. But Agnes seldom had her satisfaction in teasing; so she pulled up her horse again.

"Oh, Alex," she called back; "tell May to give the kitten some milk;—I forgot; and Alex—"

"Well, what on earth, now?"

"Don't forget to open the gate."

"I say," cried he, coming back, "you'd better take me with you, so I'll be ready to open it when you get back."

Minerva and I looked quite agreeable; in fact, Minerva looked delighted, but Agnes was disdainful.

"The idea! Why, we just started on this drive to show you our independence, and——"

"And you can't get away for fear I'll forget to open the gate."

Minerva and I laughed, but Agnes was no means disconcerted.

"That's for your own good. You said you believed we couldn't take care of ourselves, and we're just going to show you."

"I'll bet you a pair of gloves, Ag," he said, leaning his arms on the top of the gate and looking laughingly at his sister, "that you won't come back without having had the assistance of a man."

"Done!" she cried. "Girls, I call you to witness. This 20th of October, A.D., 1897. What kind would you advise me to have?"

"I think I shall have driving gloves," said her brother, meditatively, "so that I can take you out for an airing occasionally."

"Well, good-bye. I shall decide what color they are to be before I get back. Don't forget about the chicken pie; and don't forget to be at the——"

But Diamond put an end to all this nonsense by trotting demurely down the hill facing the lake.

The young man, however, did not leave the gate immediately. He stood leaning easily against it, and lighting his cigar, and gazing after us until we turned the corner and Minerva's blue plumed hat disappeared among the golden leaved trees in the hollow.

I could see it all from my vantage ground, on the low front seat; but, being very discreet, I made no remarks.

Minerva and I had come down from our town homes to spend a few days with Agnes and her large family of brothers and sisters. They were a merry group, and she the merriest of all, full of fun and frolic, and at once the bosom companion and torment of her brothers.

We had set out to-day with the firm determinaton to assert our independence and at the same time have some sort of an adventure.—Agnes was going to prove to us that country life was far more lively and exciting than living in a town, so we were both quite prepared for something thrilling to occur.

There could not have been more favorable circumstances for a drive, nor less likelihood of anything untoward happening.

Diamond trotted meekly along, his footsteps falling softly upon the golden-carpeted road. Far away ahead stretched a long lovely avenue of trees in all the glory of their October dress, and to our left the blue waters of Kempenfeldt bay sparkled in the sunshine. The sky was as clear as if it were June, with here and there just a few fleecy clouds drifting gently with the breeze. It was an ideal autumn day, but with none of the autumn haze; there was rather a suspicion of spring in the fresh breeze and the clear sky. There was nowhere a sign of anything to disturb its calm, but Agnes said we must have an adventure, just to show Alex how capable we were; so as she was our hostess we both looked to her to provide the excitement, whatever it might be.

We swept along through stretches of brown farm lands, with their comfortable houses and barns, in their crimson and golden setting of trees; over hills that gave us glorious glimpses of the great blue stretches of Lake Simcoe; and down into fairy-like hollows, where the golden-tinted leaves fluttered down upon us like a benediction.

Agnes explained every point of interest as we drove along. Her information was wide and varied, but, alas, her veracity was a very doubtful quantity.

"This is the Klondyke," she said turning Diamond Jubilee down a little hill into a woody hollow, where he waded almost knee-deep in a rustling, golden sea of leaves. And certainly it looked as if King Midas himself had been exercising his magic touch upon all around. We stopped for a moment to take in all the beauty. The sun pierced through the leafy glade, lighting up the place to a golden glory and making the few patches of green grass, visible here and there, look like emeralds in a golden setting.

"Yes, it's the Klondyke," whispered Minerva, "only far richer. Who would exchange this for all the gold in Alaska?"

"I would," responded the practical Agnes, as we drove once more into the road and real life, "for then I could have a little grove like that in my back-yard, and autumn leaves all the year round if I wished. Go on horse." And away we flew once more over a level stretch of road with the breeze from Kempenfeldt bay ruffling her dark curls and setting her little red hat jauntily upon one side.

Agnes was never so happy, nor so winsome as when she was disagreeing with everyone. We knew just how much of this she meant, so we both laughed and agreed with her.

Then we came to the post-office and store, with its sharp little bell and its untidy windows, crowded with a miscellaneous mixture of dry goods and groceries. Agnes went in for the mail and we amused ourselves trying to read the conversation lozenges that were temptingly displayed in a glass jar in the window.

She soon returned with a bag of candy and a wonderfully thick letter, written in a bold masculine hand. We recognized the hand-writing and the Toronto post-mark, and being very sympathetic in regard to such matters, Minerva insisted upon driving while Agnes devoured its contents.

Perhaps Minerva was considering that when she received letters from a certain young man, who at that moment was supposed to be mounted on the gate-post patiently awaiting our arrival. But I already knew how useless it was to speculate upon what my pretty friend held behind those great brown eyes. So I gave myself up to the delights of our surroundings.

"Now," exclaimed Agnes, suddenly, as she dived into the candy-bag, "I wonder if the nigger will be mean enough to say I got a man to help me when I bought these candies?"

"The nigger," is the appellation she had bestowed upon her brother because of his tall form and black curly hair.

"We shan't tell him," said Minerva promptly. "Go on with your letter, Aggie."

We drove nearer the bay, and a gust of wind sent a cloud of fluttering leaves down to envelop us, a fact that sent Diamond flying along in quite a reckless manner.

This gave Agnes an opportunity to scold Minerva for furious driving; and deprived us of the chance to tease her in regard to the letter. Its contents had evidently been very satisfactory, for her spirits began to rise as fast as the wind; so as we were just entering a lonely little grove we all started to sing.

We bawled "The Maple Leaf Forever" and "The Land of the Maple," in a manner that made the great solemn depths of the golden-brown forest ring. Agnes was even starting "Upon the Heights of Queenston," when we once more emerged into the sunlight and civilization, and had to settle down to act like rational beings.

"It's strange, but we don't seem to have met our adventure, yet," murmured, Minerva, innocently.

"No, but we haven't met a man who had to help us either," responded our driver gaily, "and the adventure is coming. You shall see."

"But look girls. There is something you will enjoy, Minerva."

She pulled up Diamond, under a blazing maple that grew on the edge of the slope, and pointed with her whip down into the golden depths of the belt of forest that fringed the lake.

"Do you see those green mounds in that open space, beneath the oaks, just facing the water?"

"Graves?" whispered Minerva.

"Yes. That is where five Indian braves are buried. They were Algonquins, and lost their lives helping the Jesuit missionaries, when the Iroquois attacked. At least so the story goes."

Minerva stood up and looked long at the lonely green graves lying close to the moaning shore, with the great trees bending protectingly over them.

"Oh, girls, just think of it! What a beautiful ending to all their years of strife! To lie there in this peaceful spot, under those great trees with the sunlight and the bay—"

"That will do now," said Agnes, emphatically giving Diamond a touch with the whip. "Your getting poetical, Minnie; and I may have to get the assistance of a doctor to take you home, and I can't afford to lose those gloves."

"Really you have no soul," exclaimed poor Minerva looking longingly back at the beautiful spot.

"Haven't I, though? Here, Martha, is something that will suit you." And she stopped once more beside a great field of flourishing, strongly-smelling turnips.

Minerva, and I uttered expostulatory shrieks, at the incongruity. But Agnes stood up in the buggy and waved her whip tragically towards the offensive vegetables.

"Oh, girls, just think of it!" To lie there in this peaceful spot, under those great clods of earth.

We were just preparing to throw her out of the buggy, when Diamond mercifully intervened, starting off with a suddenness that set our orator down most emphatically upon her seat; and peace reigned once more.

But the wind from the bay had risen to quite a gale and threatening black clouds were beginning to pile up in the north.

"Oh, dear, it's going to rain, and we haven't had our adventure yet!" cried Agnes. "Get up there, Diamond Jubilee!"

It was quite impossible to keep from singing, as we flew along in the exhilirating breeze, so we broke into "The Land of the Maple," once more, as the scarlet emblem of our country, danced merrily about us.

Diamond Jubilee, who, as her name shows, was very sensitive to anything of a patriotic character, he threw up his head and tore along at such a rate that, before we realized it, we were right in the midst of a barn yard, where a threshing machine was clattering noisily in the barn, and a fussy black engine was puffing and rattling away within a few feet of our road.

Diamond Jubilee promptly got upon his hind legs, and we all three grabbed the lines and implored him to come down. This very sensible proceeding on our part, only made him dance and leap. I was meditating a leap over the dashboard, Minerva was on the verge of hysterics, and Agnes was standing up heroically sawing at the lines, and we were all there screaming with terror, when a great, big, burly man, with his face all black from his engine, slipped easily over the fence and came towards us.

And then we forgot all about our independence, and Agnes' gloves, and shrieked for help in quite a dependent manner.

The giant grinned, and leisurely taking hold of our rearing steed's bridle, set him firmly upon his four feet, as if he had been a toy animal out of Noah's Ark.

"Skittish, ain't he!" he asked with a rather suspicious cough. "Want to get past?"

But we had suddenly begun to think our drive had been long enough and as Diamond Jubilee was still glancing nervously at the black engine, we decided that it was time to turn homeward.

So our rescuer whirled us round, and away we flew once more, leaving thanks and blessings heaped upon the head of the amused fireman, who was evidently convulsed with suppressed laughter.

"We've had our adventure," gasped Minerva.

"Oh, my gloves," groaned Agnes."

"If you girls hadn't screamed so," I suggested, knowing all the while that my own voice had soared above all the others. They immediately quenched me however, and we ended by laughing heartily at our own expense.

Just then a farmer's double buggy came rattling briskly past, laden with the family and a liberal cargo of butter and eggs, and bound for Barrie to do their Saturday's shopping.

Then we drove through the golden silence of the "Klondyke," once more, and turned into the old church yard at Shanty Bay. There is a beautiful old church there with the scarlet-leaved ivy, clinging to its roughly-plastered walls. We tied Diamond to a rail of the fence and slipping through the creaking old door, entered the dimly-lit building. It was old and damp, with dark, discolored walls, but the light shone through a beautiful stained window at one end and lit the place with a soft radiance. An old pipe organ stood in one corner, and Agnes and I slipped into one of the high-backed pews, near the door, while Minerva played a soft low melody that mingled wondrously with the moaning of the wind outside and the soft light from the windows.

It seemed almost like desecration to remain, so we slipped out and waded through the long grass of the churchyard to where the white tomb-stones stood in a corner surrounded by a grove of great oaks.

Agnes was afraid Minerva might become poetical again, so she dragged us back to the buggy once more.

We went out into the wind again to find that the blue sky had all disappeared; Kempenfeldt bay grey and angry, was lashing up against the beach, and the wind had risen to a perfect hurricane. Diamond threw up his head angrily, as a cloud of wet leaves dashed into his face, and away we flew with the rain splashing into our faces.

The only living creatures we saw on our wild ride home were a donkey in a crimson strewn field, and a young man on a bicycle. Both were evidently absorbed in their flight with the elements, for neither took the slightest notice of us, a fact which Agnes put down to the natural stupidity of both animals.

"And oh, how the wind did blow! One moment we were enveloped in a whirling maze of scarlet leaves and flying haw-berries, and the next we were lost in a shower of gold from some dismantled tree. We were beginning to have apprehensions of a more serious adventure in the shape of falling trees, when at last we got a welcome glimpse of Bay View House, set on its tree-clad hill; and the next moment we are driving rapidly up the slope.

The faithful "Nigger" is already at the gate, and another brother is waiting on the verandah to take our horse.

The dear mother comes out in the rain to welcome us back; and May comes to the door speechless with laughter at our delapidated appearance.

"You certainly must have had your adventure," they all say. "And from your appearance, I should suppose it was a tumble into the lake," says May.

"Did you bring my gloves, Ag?" asks the "Nigger" as he lifts her out.

But she is not daunted yet. "Certainly not. Why should I? There wasn't a man——"

Minerva, who cannot possibly tell a lie, says, "Oh, Agnes!" And May cries.

"Did you see a young man on a bicycle on your return?"

And then Agnes suggests that we go in to dinner.

Martha Graham.

Orillia, Ont.

THE PEROXIDE FUTILITY.

It is an unsettled question whether bleaching the hair leads to softening of the brain, or softening of the brain leads to bleaching of the hair.

THE SUSPECTED WIFE.

Yeast—Did you notice those cuts on Bacon's face to-day?

Crimsonbeak—Yes; do you suppose he's been trying to shave himself, or has his wife come home?

AGRICULTURAL.

WHAT SHALL WE DO IN WINTER.

What can we do in the way of horticulture during the winter, when vegetable growth is suspended and active operations in orchard and garden can be carried on only at a disadvantage? To meet with the greatest success in any branch of agriculture, says Country Gentleman, those engaged in it must manage to be profitably employed all the year round. In commerce, manufactures, transportation, banking, and in the learned professions, winter is as fruitful in results as is summer—if anything, more so. But, because the cultivator of the soil cannot till in winter, he is at a loss to turn his time and labor to good account. Stable manure, fresh from the stalls of domestic animals, can be hauled and spread over the roots of trees, shrubs, canes and vines, of perennial plants and upon ground designed to be plowed and planted in the spring. There is no better time to apply manure than when it is made, and no better way than upon the surface in winter. A great many of our most intelligent and successful agriculturists and horticulturists have become convinced, from repeated experiments, that better results are realized from using manure in this way than in any other. In winter the ground is generally frozen so that driving over it does not cut it up, and the fertilizing contents are all in, but begin to escape as soon as fermentation commences. The rains and melting snows of winter dissolve the plant food and wash it into the soil ready to be absorbed by roots of trees and plants as soon as growth is renewed in the spring. In the warmer days of the latter part of winter and early spring, pruning and grafting may be done. I have trimmed apple trees in February, but would not advise doing it except on the milder days, for it is poor economy to run the risk of colds, perhaps pneumonia, for the sake of gaining a little time. I have chopped wood in a thickly-timbered wood-lot, protected from the wind, when it would have been dangerous trimming a less sheltered orchard. But if the horticulturist cannot, at all times in winter, work out of doors with impunity, he can perform intellectual labor, making plans and preparations for the work of the ensuing season. One can go to work in the spring with much greater alacrity and effectiveness if he has his plans all worked out, fully matured in mind, ready for material expression. If he is intending to plant fruits, either for family use or for market, he can carefully measure the ground which he intends to plant and make a plot of it upon paper; determine the distance apart to plant the various species of fruits, large or small, and the exact place in the plat that they will occupy, and then calculate how many trees and plants he will require to fill it. He can then ascertain the number of trees and plants of the different species and varieties he will want, correspond with reliable nurserymen and place his order where he finds he can do best. I have known farmers to declare, when the delicious summer fruits were in season and their friends were enjoying them, that they would not allow another spring to pass without planting an assortment of fruit, but when spring arrived, they had not matured their plans, did not know how many or what sorts of plants they wanted or where to go for them, the press of spring work was too great to allow time to make calculations, and the fruit garden would be postponed, probably never to be materialized. The man intending to plant fruit for market gives some time, of course, to making plans and preparations, but I think he often finds them incomplete, in many respects, when the time for action arrives. If he should employ his long winter evenings and stormy days in studying the business, reading on it, attending horticultural meetings, consulting experienced fruit-growers, in order to ascertain what species are most profitable, and what varieties are most hardy and productive and meet with readiest sale, he would find, in the end, that the time had been profitably spent. There are few market fruit-growers who do not realize that some of their varieties are much more profitable than others, and that, if their orchards were all planted with the most profitable kinds, their net profits would be greatly augmented. I have visited the grounds of many of our most successful fruit growers, but have yet to meet the first one who is perfectly satisfied with all of his varieties; who would not change some of them were he to plant again. It is with market fruit-growers the same as it is with a dairyman, whose profit comes mainly from part of his herd and comes mainly from part of his herd and who tries to weed out the poorer ones that all may bring in a profit. It would be well to weed out the unprofitable kinds before planting, but, failing in that, in some species, varieties can be quickly changed by budding or grafting.

A STORAGE HOUSE FOR POTATOES.

A reader asks for directions for building a storage house for potatoes in which to keep them for winter, writes Waldo F. Brown: Such a house can be easily and cheaply constructed and may be either entirely above ground, or partly below. In dry soil it will be cheaper to excavate and make it partly under ground. I would prefer that it be on sloping ground, so that at one end there will be no steps to carry the potatoes up and down. I would make the house fourteen feet wide, inside measure, and of such length as is necessary to hold the amount you wish to store. The inside arrangement should be two rows of bins, five feet square, standing out four inches from the wall on either side, with an alley between them to pass in to fill. These bins should be divided by 2x4 studding, set so as to give a four-inch ventilating space between each two bins. The floor should also be raised four inches from the ground, and if the back studding is set edgewise against the wall, it will give a four-inch space there. I estimate that each two and one-half feet of length of this house will hold 100 bushels of potatoes if the bins are filled to the depth of about five feet. Provide for thorough ventilation by a good window at each end and a ventilator in the roof, for the danger of loss by frost is trifling compared to that from too high a temperature, which will cause sprouting. I would make the room with a ceiling not more than seven feet high, as it will be easier to control the temperature than with a high ceiling. Keep the ventilators open in the fall until freezing weather, and all through the winter watch your thermometer, and guard against extremes. The nearer you can keep the temperature to 40 degrees the better. If the building is made of lumber I would make the walls a foot thick by using studding twelve inches wide, and boarding on both sides, and packing the space with some good non-conducting substance, sawdust, corn chaff, or leaves will answer. The windows at the ends should have frames wide enough to fill the space, and two sashes, one in and one outside. There should be a storm door enclosing a space large enough to stand in, and two doors, one opening out and one in, so that in zero weather you can go in and out and not let in the cold. I buy culled oak lumber for all such purposes as this for $55 per thousand feet, and as it is sound, and lasts much better than pine, it is very economical. This lumber has small worm holes, not large enough to admit a pin, which causes it to be classed as cull. I think in the dry Kansas soil one might simply make a pit, board up the sides, and put a temporary roof over it, cover it with prairie hay or corn fodder at a nominal expense, and securely winter potatoes. But a permanent house such as I describe is not expensive. An oil stove or even two large lamps can be used in zero weather.

TEACHING HORSES TO WALK FAST.

Enterprising farmers are not satisfied with slow horses, says a writer: It makes very little difference whether they can trot fast or not, but they must walk. When a man with one pair of horses goes with his cultivator into a field of corn containing from fifty to seventy-five acres he wants that team to walk rapidly and easily. I never leave the field until I have gone over ten acres, and sometimes twelve. This must be done in ten hours; there is no advantage in making a working day twelve to fifteen hours long, as farmers did fifty years ago. I never go into the field until 7 o'clock. At night every chore must be done before sundown. I like to work a colt some at two years old. I hitch him to a riding cultivator with a fast walker and then see that he keeps up. He must not be whipped, but he will need touching up hundreds of times the first day and perhaps for several days. The main thing ist to make him understand that he must keep up with the other horse. When he once learns to walk fast he will never forget, and a riding cultivator is the best tool to teach him with. A slow-moving man will have a slow team even though they were good walkers when in the hands of the other man. After all, horses are a good deal like the driver, and the driver is very much as he was made. It would be a fine thing if some slow, puttering farmers could move a little faster.

A GOOD PLAN.

Exempting Workmen's Homes From Taxation

In many parts of Europe the local authorities are striving to ameliorate the condition of the workingmen and encourage thrift and industry by offering special inducements to those who show a disposition to help themselves. One plan that is being tried in several cities in Belgium seems to be regarded with general favor and may be adopted in other countries. It provides for the exemption of workingmen from the payment of building, paving and sewerage taxes when the building erected or transformed is destined to be used as a dwelling for the builder and is upon property secured under certain conditions accorded to workingmen. The advantages of this regulation are extended to all societies associated with the saving bureau of the government, which erect or transform buildings by one of the methods prescribed by the bureau thereby assisting workingmen to the ownership of dwelling houses, and to incorporated associations, organized for a period of at least ten years, which erect buildings destined to be rented to workingmen, and which agree in their charter that their dividends shall not exceed 3 per cent. Of course, these privileges are guarded by restriction to prevent their abuse. For instance, if the workingman does not actually occupy the dwelling within three months after it is completed, if he ceases to occupy it within five years, or transferes the ownership to another not entitled to exemption, or if the premises are used for the sale of liquors, the taxes are payable as in the case of any other property. Thus far this plan, with some modifications, has been adopted in several places, and in all apparently with good results.